

I didn't know he had died.

I thought he had gone home
early
because I was leaving too
and they gave me his
card
to punch him out
on the hour.

Mill Life

We sat on the landing
Thelma and I
smoking Luckies
her Luckies.

She said she smoked
a pack a day
for sixteen years
and I felt better.

Green came out
and said
the machine was working again
and
Thelma spit
and told him to screw.
She didn't like Green.

In the field across the way
two children flew kites
and Thelma said
she liked to fly kites
but
the train car pulled in
blocking the view.

Thelma cursed the car
and
we went in
because
the machine was working again.

Joe

When happy
he laughs
a
full
hearted
and toothless
laugh
and sings out for the world to hear

"shit to hell"

When angry
he growls
a
full
hearted
and toothless
growl
and cries out for the world to hear

"fuck'em all"

Two months only
since
old Joe
the Pole
arrived
and already
a master of English.

On Old Mike's Quitting

I wasn't surprised.
I knew he had gone.
No
smell of cherry blend
in
the men's room.
always it smelled cherry blend.

No scandal sheet by No. 3

and Sophie!
Sophie was gone!
Ripped off the wall.
now
only pieces
of
yellow tape
where once hung

the nicest looking
broad
in Chicago.

Horace

Horace,
how I wish
I had treated you better.

You brought me
coffee
and nuts
and the National Inquirer.

You gave me
Kools
and clung to my side
wanting
only a smile